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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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'Have got' *as a* Substitute *for* 'Have'

FREDERICK T. WOOD

THE OBJECT of this article is to examine the use in modern colloquial English of the periphrasis *have got* as a synonym for *have*, a matter which seems simple enough to the native English person, who has been using it all his life without ever thinking about it, but which is by no means so simple to the foreigner. If we want a name for it we may call it a 'substitute-present' tense, though in some of its uses 'resultative present' might more accurately describe it. By origin, of course, it is a perfect of *get* (=*obtain, acquire, receive*) but what I have obtained I now possess—hence the development of meaning. How easily the one passes into the other can be seen from the following lines from Matthew Arnold's poem *Sohrab and Rustum:*

> There would I go, and hang my armour up,
> And with my great name fence that weak old man,
> And spend the goodly treasures I have got . . .
> And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings.

By *have got*, of course, is meant *have amassed*; but there is also a temptation to read it as *possess*, and possibly many schoolboys and girls, making their acquaintance with the poem for the first time, do put that interpretation upon it. Its earliest use in the latter sense (i.e. as a substitute-present) seems to have been in the early part of the sixteenth century, first in connexion with material things where from the fact of possession one might reasonably infer acquisition (e.g. *He has got a horse, I have got some money*), but then, as the notion of acquisition receded into the background and that of possession became more prominent, it was extended to non-material things or to those where there could be no question of acquisition: e.g. *Have you got room for a few more things in that box? She has got blue eyes. A table has got four legs.* The next stage was the extension into the semi-metaphorical field: *I've got no room for people who are always complaining.*

In past generations, by the would-be purist and by those who considered themselves 'correct', it was often condemned as a vulgarism; and even today it is not uncommon to find children who have been told by their teachers (usually in junior schools) that 'you shouldn't use *got*', though the teachers themselves probably use it scores of times a day. There is really no objection to it provided it is confined to conversational English. There are, however, certain facts which it is necessary to bear in mind.

(i) In not every case is *have got* a substitute for *have*; quite

frequently it is a genuine perfect: e.g. *He has got a scholarship to Oxford* (=gained), *I have got a rise in salary* (=have been given). We may reasonably regard the verb as a substitute-present in *We have got a new car* (though it might not be—the context or the situation will usually make plain whether it is or not) but we cannot so regard it in *We have just got a new car*. Indeed, if the verb is modified by any adverb denoting past time, if only recently past, considered in its relation to *now*, or the moment of speaking, it can be only a perfect, not a present. We have examples of both tenses in *I have got* (i.e. have bought) *a present for John but I have not got it with me*.

(ii) *Have* is used in many different senses, and by no means every one allows of replacement by *have got*. The field is fairly restricted, as will be shown hereafter.

(iii) Even in the case of those examples which do allow of replacement, *have got* is used only when a specific occasion is in question. If the statement is a general one, or if it denotes recurrence, the simple *have* must be employed: thus *I have got a headache* (now) but *I have headaches* (frequently or periodically): *My mother has got rheumatism* (now) but *My mother has rheumatism in damp weather*. This however does not preclude the use of *have got*: (*a*) where recurrence or frequency is concerned if each occasion is thought of separately, as in such sentences as *He has always got some excuse, They have never got what you want at that shop, Whenever you meet her she has got some complaint or other:* (*b*) of a general characteristic which, because it is always true, can be regarded as true at the time of speaking: *Dogs have got a keen sense of smell. Most schoolboys have got large appetites. We have got five fingers on each hand*: (*c*) of a situation which exists permanently, or at least for a long time, but is thought of as being the position at the moment of speaking: *He has got a good home and a well-paid job. She has got her widowed mother living with her. Polly's got her young man and you've got your business and out all day seeing people: what have I got?* (Allan Monkhouse. *The Grand Cham's Diamond*). The husband's reply to this last remark is worth noticing: *What does any woman have? I dunno what you're botherin' about*. He might, of course, have said *What has any woman got?*, and if he had he would have meant 'take any particular woman and ask yourself what, at this moment, is her lot.' But he does not mean this: he is thinking of women generally, at any time. Similarly *Many children have measles* may mean that there is at the moment an epidemic of measles amongst children; and if it means that then *have* can be replaced by *have got*. But it may also be a general statement regarding the liability of children to catch measles sometime during their

life, though at the moment there may be very few cases. If that is so, then the substitution of *have got* is ruled out.

(iv) Even where *have got* is possible as an alternative to *have* it does not follow that it is equally acceptable. In some situations or contexts it might even be felt to be preferable but in others the tendency would be to prefer the plain *have*. On this something will be said later.

(v) Not in every case where *have got* is felt to be a suitable substitute for a present tense is *had got* felt to be equally suitable for the past; and it is doubtful whether the substitution is ever made in the future. It is true that beside *I shall have a bicycle by next summer* there exists *I shall have got a bicycle*, &c., but we do not feel that they mean quite the same thing. The former denotes merely future possession; the latter is the future perfect of the verb *to get* and means *I shall have received/obtained/been given*. In sentences of the type *Don't worry about Tom; he'll have got plenty of money with him*, from the strict grammatical point of view we probably have a substitute-future; but it is not future in sense; it is present, meaning 'it is highly probable that he has.'

It has been stated above (paragraph (ii)) that not all the different senses of *have* will allow of replacement by *have got*. We may ask, then, which of them will? We shall find, I think, that they fall under the following four heads.

(i) When *have* denotes possession or some idea closely akin to it: *He has got an estate in Scotland. Have you got a typewriter? She has got ginger hair. This newspaper has got a large circulation in the Midlands.* When what is vaguely represented as possession is really little more than existence *have got* is still possible, though generally we should prefer *have*: e.g. *He hasn't much hope of passing his examination.* The sense is not that he himself does not possess much hope (he may be very hopeful) but that there is not much hope. Similarly *We haven't much chance to save money nowadays.*

(ii) When *have* denotes a feature or characteristic of the thing or the person which is the subject of the verb: *The house has got bay windows. These shoes have got rubber soles. Is he clean-shaven or has he got a beard?*

(iii) When *have* denotes, not possession or a characteristic, but a situation as it affects or relates to the subject: *He has got one foot in the grave. Have you got sugar in your tea? We've got a friend waiting for us out in the car. The police have got him under observation.* This type is very frequent with a retroactive infinitive: *I've got some shopping to do. Haven't you got anything to read?* One cannot be too dogmatic, but I think it might be found that we tend to use the plain *have* in such sentences as these (at least when they are state-

ments) if we are stating the mere existence of a situation, and *have got* if we are representing it as something of an impediment, an embarrassment, a burden, an annoyance, &c. Thus *I've this report to finish* (no sense of urgency) but *I can't come to dinner just yet; I've got this report to finish.*

(iv) When, followed by an infinitive, *have* denotes necessity, obligation, duty, compulsion, &c. *I can't come out to play as I've got to help my mother. The doctor says he's got to stay in bed. We've got to be home by ten o'clock.* The active infinitive is the more frequent but a parallel construction with a passive infinitive is also possible: *The unpleasant jobs have got to be done by someone.*

With this infinitive construction, as with the earlier types we have examined, *have got* cannot be used for what is recurrent, habitual or general; we must say *We have to be at school by nine o'clock. We have to pay for our lunches at the beginning of each week* if we mean that that is the general rule, though this restriction is subject to the modifications noted in paragraph (iii) of page 114. For instance, even when we are speaking in general terms we can say *You've got to be there very early to get a seat. I've got to leave home at* 7.30 *to make sure of getting to the station in time*, since we are thinking of each occasion separately or of a typical occasion as representative of the general situation. But with the infinitive a new factor enters in which was not present with the other constructions. In the case of these latter *have* could refer only to the strict present or to a present extending back into the past, but with the infinitive it may denote a present extending forwards into the future, and when the reference is to what is to become the general rule from now, or from some specified time in the future, onwards it is quite possible to use *have got*: e.g. *In future we have got to be at school by* 8.50. *From next September we have got to pay for our lunches at the beginning of each term.* It may also be used for an obligation to be carried out on a specific occasion or at a specific time in the future, provided that it is represented as *existing* at the time of speaking irrespective of when it is to become operative: e.g. *I have got to go to London next Tuesday. He's got to see the manager tomorrow.* It cannot, however, be used in reference to a specific occasion in the future if the obligation is represented as likely to arise but has not arisen yet; for this purpose we must use *have*: e.g. *I shall not stay after ten o'clock unless I have to. We shall insist on seeing him even though we have to wait all day.* This restriction, of course, arises from the nature of the verb *have got*. Since it is grammatically a perfect it can be used only when there is some point of contact with the present. *We shall not have enough money if we have to pay for our tickets* envisages a situation that

may arise in the future; *We shall not have enough money if we have got to pay for our tickets* speaks of a situation which already exists; the actual payment is not to be made until some future time but we are already aware of the necessity of paying.

And this prompts a further question: what is the difference of meaning between *must do*, *have to do* and *have got to do*? *Must* merely denotes the existence of, or lays down, an obligation or a necessity (or in negative sentences more often a prohibition). A doctor says to a patient *You must give up smoking. You must not eat starchy foods*: a mother admonishes her children *You must be polite to people when you speak to them. You must not play in the road. You must keep away from the pond.* In such sentences as these the speaker is, from a strictly grammatical point of view, stating the existence of a necessity or an obligation, though if he happens to be someone who stands in a relationship of authority to the person to whom the remark is addressed he is, by implication, imposing it on him, so that it becomes in effect an instruction. In the first person the obligation, duty, necessity or whatever we choose to call it is self-imposed: *I must go and write those letters. I must call and see the Joneses this week. We really must post those Christmas parcels today.* In none of these could *have* or *have got* be substituted. Why? Because, *have* and *have got*, unlike *must*, represent the necessity or the obligation as being 'possessed' or 'acquired' by the subject because it has *already* been imposed upon him. Thus the patient repeating to his wife the doctor's instructions says *I have* (*got*) *to give up smoking. I haven't* (*got*) *to eat starchy foods*, and she repeating them to a friend says *My husband has* (*got*) *to give up smoking*, &c.[1], while the children, passing on their mother's warning to their playmates, will say *We haven't* (*got*) *to play in the road.*[2] *We have* (*got*) *to keep away from the pond.* The business man

[1] I think that even the doctor and mother might use *have got* if they repeated the instruction, for then they would be reminding the patient or the child, as the case may be, of an obligation already imposed by their earlier injunction: *Now don't forget: you've got to avoid starchy foods and give up smoking. Remember what I said: you've got to keep away from the pond.* Similarly a clergyman, on being told that one of his parishioners is ill, would probably remark *I must call and see her* (he feels an obligation or a duty to do so), but thereafter the duty which he has taken upon himself becomes an imposed one and he uses *have* or *have got* in referring to it. Thus, in offering to take some flowers to the sick person from a member of his congregation who finds it inconvenient to go herself, he assures her *It will be no trouble; I've got to call and see her.*

[2] So far as the negative is concerned *We haven't got to play in the road* should mean *we are not obliged to play*, but it is commonly used also when the meaning is *we are obliged not to play*. To bring out the former meaning unambiguously we must emphasise *got* (*We haven't GOT to play in the road*), implying that we may play there if we wish but we have received no instructions that we *must*.

who tells his wife *I must be at the office early tomorrow* is merely informing her of the existence of a necessity without indicating whether it is one of his own choice, whether it is dictated by circumstances or whether it has been imposed upon him by another. If he says *I have* (*got*) *to be at the office early tomorrow* he implies that it is not his own choice. Of course, he may express himself in this way when really there is no compulsion or necessity beyond that which arises from his own desire or intention, just as the speaker of the earlier sentences might have said *I have* (*got*) *to go and write those letters* or *I have* (*got*) *to go and see the Joneses this week* when in reality the only compelling force is his own determination or sense of duty; but that does not invalidate the distinction here made. He still *implies* that the necessity is not one of his own choice, however misleading or however far from the true facts of the situation such an implication may be.

There is, however, a certain type of construction with the infinitive where, for all practical purposes, it makes little difference whether we use *must* or *have* (*got*) *to*. It is represented by *We must eat to live. We must all die some day. You have to be over eighteen before you can enter for the examination. In Britain you have to go to school until you are at least fifteen years old. You've got to be a pretty skilful player to beat him.* Here the necessity arises from the order of nature, from circumstances, from official regulations, from the law, &c. We may therefore regard it either as being imposed upon us by these things, and use *have* (*got*), or merely as existing, in which case we shall use *must*.

But there is also a rather different use of *must* (usually stressed in speech) which should be clearly distinguished from the foregoing, since an alternative rendering with *have* (*got*) *to* is not possible. It is employed for two main purposes. First, to express annoyance or disgust, as in the sentences *It múst start to rain just as I had decided to mow the lawn. You múst choose the weekend when we have visitors to repair that wireless set. The charwoman múst go and fall ill just when I wanted to start spring cleaning.* The suggestion is that the occurrence complained of is due to a kind of perversity, 'awkwardness', or lack of consideration on the part of the person in question (or in the first sentence on the part of the elements) and that therefore the 'necessity', such as it is, is one for which he alone is responsible, not one forced upon him by circumstances or by anyone else. And secondly this stressed *must* is used to express a strong probability amounting almost to certainty: *I do not know her exact age, but she múst be well over fifty. You múst be well off, to live in a house like that.* It is true we could say *You have got to be well off to live in a house like that*, but the meaning would not

be quite the same. *You must be* &c., means " From the fact that you live in a house like that I infer that you are well off." *You have got to be*, &c., means " To be well off is a pre-requisite of living in a house like that " or " It is no use thinking of living in a house like that unless you are well off." Two friends out walking together pass a large house with an attractive-looking garden, and one remarks, 'That is the kind of house I should like.' The other replies, 'You've got to be well off to live in a house like that.' But if, on the other hand, the first remark is 'That large house there, with the garden, is my house', then the reply might well be, 'You must be well off to live in a house like that.'

As to the difference between *have to* and *have got to*, there is usually very little; but *have got to* is frequently felt to be more urgent or more imperative than *have to;* e.g. *I shouldn't go out in this weather unless you've got to.* Which a speaker uses will depend partly upon his personal whim, partly upon the degree of emphasis or urgency that he wishes to convey; it is much easier to give a strong stress to *have got* than to *have*. It may be, too, that we tend to use *have got to* when we are fairly strongly conscious that the necessity or the obligation is an imposed one (*Surely you needn't go as early as this?—Mother says I've got to*), *have* when this sense is less strongly felt. *I have to call at the bank* may mean little more than 'I intend to' or 'that is part of my arrangements': *I have got to call at the bank* suggests something more urgent or imperative. *I have to see him at* 10.30 might be said by a speaker who had himself arranged the time of the interview or who at least had been a party to the arrangement, *I have got to see him at* 10.30 by one who is complying with an instruction or a request. But usage is rather arbitrary and will no doubt vary from speaker to speaker. It may to some extent, too, depend upon the occasion and upon those to whom one is speaking; and there is also the fact that we are often apt to represent a thing as being more urgent or imperative than it actually is or to prefer more forceful language to a sober statement of fact.

On page 115 (point (iv)) it has been stated that even where *have got* is possible as an alternative to *have* in the present tense, *had got* is not always equally acceptable in the past. It is difficult to lay down a precise rule in this matter, but broadly speaking we may say that there is no objection to *had got* when the reference is obviously to a particular moment or a specific occasion, as for instance in the sentences *She had got two young children with her. One of the children had got a picture book in his hand. Both had got fair hair and blue eyes.* Here *had got* serves the same purpose for the past as *have got* serves for the present (though even so many people would prefer to use *had*). But the situation is different when we come to those sentences

where, in the present, a permanent state or one which exists for some while is spoken of as existing at the moment of speaking, as *Egyptians have got dark skins. He has got a club foot. America has got the strongest navy in the world.* When we are speaking of the past we do not generally relate these things to a specific moment, but think rather of the whole period of time to which they apply; hence we use *had* rather than *had got*: *The Phoenicians had dark skins. Byron had a club foot. Fifty years ago Britain had the strongest navy in the world.* We may well say *I cannot go to the party as I have got a cold*, but speaking some weeks afterwards we should probably say *I could not go to the party as I had a cold.*

Finally we may ask, where *have* and *have got* are both possible, when do we incline to give preference to the one and when to the other? So far as the infinitive constructions are concerned the answer has already been suggested. For the others we may say that *have got* seems to be favoured (i) when possession of some easily transferrable thing like a watch, a pen, a bicycle, a necktie, &c., is concerned—things which we possess because we have acquired them: (ii) of non-material things when there is the sense of having 'received' them, e.g. *We've got three weeks' holiday. She has got influenza. I've got a brain-wave*: (iii) in sentences where it is desired to stress the verb, as when a mother says to her grubby-looking child *You háve got a dirty face*: (iv) in questions where the stress must fall on the verb, and especially if the verb falls at the end, e.g. *What have you got in your hand? What has this box got in it? Guess what I've got. What would you like for tea?—Well, what have you got?* The simple *have*, on the other hand, is perhaps preferred when the sense of acquisition is absent: e.g. *We haven't any time to lose. Have you anything to say? He hasn't long to live.* A father who wishes to know how much money his son has managed to save up would probably ask *Have you got a pound yet?* because here there is the notion of the boy's coming to possess the money by gradually acquiring it; but he would probably ask a friend *Have you a pound that you could lend me?*, because here the notion of acquisition does not enter in. It should be stated again, however, that these are only indications of general tendencies; there are no definite rules, and practice varies a good deal. If a non-British speaker is in doubt he had better use *have* and avoid *have got*. He will not run the risk of making a mistake, except that now and then he may appear a little more formal than the occasion demands.

Vocabulary Selection *and the* Minimum Adequate Vocabulary

MICHAEL WEST

A COMMITTEE sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation met in New York to consider the problem of vocabulary selection in the teaching of English to foreigners. Its *Interim Report* was published in 1936. The list of selected words contained in this report was re-issued in 1953 under the title *A General Service List of English Words.* In this re-issued report the relative frequencies of the various meanings and uses of the words (as found by a count of 2½ to 5 million words made under the direction of Dr Irvinge Lorge and Professor Thorndike) were added.

A number of criticisms and queries have been received by the editorial board of this journal and I have been asked to explain the nature and purpose of the said word-list.

The main criticism concerns what are commonly called the Content words, the names of things which we talk about. For example Ball is included, but not Bat, Wine but not Beer; although Beer appears in the Supplementary list for science.

Let it be stated at the outset that, in the opinion of this writer, the word Wine is a doubtful inclusion in the G.S. list; perhaps it ought not to be there. The same remark applies to Elephant, Monkey, Penny, Pigeon, Rabbit, Rice, Saucer. The list is a GENERAL SERVICE List. Dr Faucett and Dr Palmer insisted on that, while I was rather in favour of the M.A.V. (the Minimum Adequate Vocabulary). The Scientific Vocabulary plus the General Service List constitute an M.A.V.; together they are the Minimum Vocabulary[1] which is Adequate for explaining any ordinary scientific or technical idea.

One can have different M.A.V's—for different purposes (Tourism, Business correspondence, general social life, &c.) and for different circumstances (rich, poor, middle), and for different areas (U.S.A., India, Africa). Evidently what the critics (referred to above) want is an M.A.V., and they are disappointed that the General Service List does not supply this need. But an M.A.V. is something which every teacher or textbook writer must construct for himself: the General Service list will be a great help to him in so doing.

[1]To be exact, the vocabulary of the *New Method Dictionary* (1,360 words) plus some 700 of the words in the Scientific list, is the M.A.V. for that purpose (a total of about 2,000 words). The G.S. list contains a number of words not found necessary in writing the *Explaining Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Words.*

Words can conveniently be classified under two main headings: A—**FORM WORDS** (also called Structural Words). These are the words which we speak *with*. They are liable to be used in any discourse on any subject. They make up the structure of the language. They are of two kinds:—

A.1. **Essential words,** and A.2. **General words.**

The **Essential words** (some 150 in number) are words which no vocabulary (however small) can do without. They are such words as *The*, *Is*, *Do*, *Be*, *Say*; the pronouns; the simplest conjunctions, and so on.

The **General words** fulfil the same purely structural function, but they are more refined, more limited in use and meaning; and the less frequent general words are more stylistic. Thus among the Essential words we have *Say*; among the General words *Exclaim*, *Pronounce*, *Utter*. The Essential word *Yes* has its General counterparts, *Agree* and *Acquiesce*.

There are two points to be noted about these words. (1) Many of them, especially the more frequent are very complicated—a fact well brought out by the G.S. list. Perhaps the analysis of these more complex structural words (such at *Put* and *Make*) is one of the more useful features of the G.S. list. (2) Many of these words are very dispensable: we can do without them. Opening the G.S. list at random we find *Combine*=join: *Command*=order: *Complete*=whole, all: *Compose*=write, put together, make: *Confident*=sure, certain, trust.

The other class of words is B—**CONTENT WORDS**. These are the words which we talk about: they constitute the substance of our talk. They are of two kinds:

B.1. **Common Environmental Words.** These are words connected with things which are a part of the environment of all men: *Sleep*, *Eat*, *Bed*, *Food*, and so on.

B.2. **Specific Words.** These are words which are peculiar to one group of men.

There are three points to be noted about these Content Words:—

(1) They are most of them very simple in their structure; having only one meaning, or only a few closely related meanings.

(2) They are very numerous; indeed they are almost limitless.

(3) They are very unpredictable: it is hard to select those which should be taught.

The tendency of the schoolmaster is to concentrate his attention on the (A) group of words—to aim at Form with a minimum of Substance. He likes to produce a boy who speaks the language beautifully but doesn't know the word for a shoe-lace, a sausage or a punctured tyre. He has three reasons for doing this.

(1) He cannot safely predict what words his pupils will require. (In support of this he often quotes some of the rather ridiculous prognostications made by Tourist phrase books.)
(2) He says that if the pupils have a 'good foundation' they will quickly pick up these 'easy' words afterwards.
(3) He says that these words will be learnt more easily in a situation of real need than in the artificial circumstances of the class-room.

One would like to add a fourth reason—namely that Schoolmasters are Schoolmasters, and all schoolmasters love talking about 'a good foundation', not only in Modern Language Teaching, but in most subjects. The fact is that schoolmasters do not like dealing with the present: the present is so liable to go out of date. Moreover there is something vulgar and unacademic about present needs, and examiners are always keener on good foundations than on immediate practicability—even if the pupil never builds any superstructure. The way to English (and all foreign languages) in schools is, like the road to Hell, 'paved with good foundations'.

On the other hand, the pupil's demand is exactly the opposite—especially the older or adult pupils' demand. They want to get a minimum of the structure so as to 'get on with it'—to get on with going abroad and talking the languge, asking for things, making themselves understood. Even the younger pupils tend to be bored with Substanceless Form—with opening windows that do not need opening, discussions of the weather, unreal situations in the picture of a foreign town, pointless anecdotes and snippets.

There are two dangers here:—
(1) There is the danger of cutting away too much of the structure, thereby leaving awkward gaps, or even producing a fictitious economy. Cut out *stay with* or *visit* and use *put up with*: cut out *bear* or *suffer* and use *put up with*. These are, of course, purposely absurd instances; yet the danger is real. Is it necessary to keep *Almost* as well as *Nearly*, *Actually* as well as *Really*, *Give the book to him* as well as *Give him the book*? It is very easy to cut and be sorry afterwards.
(2) There is the danger of cutting down the words but not cutting down the usages and collocations of the words. It is here that Dr Lorge's work is of such value: it shows just what parts of the word are really important. We must have the word *Put*; but just how much of it is really necessary?

One could, of course, make a very small and very easily-learnt M.A.V. of English (or any other language) if some degree of abnormality were allowed. Indeed this is quite a fascinating problem for the linguistic adventurer. 'Basic' has made some valuable excursions in this territory, but not quite with the same aim—a

Minimum Intelligible Vocabulary. One might start with Pidgin English and work up, or start with a Minimum Adequate Vocabulary and simplify down. Tourists might welcome this in French and Spanish and other European languages—but the critics would 'furiously rage', and perhaps no publisher would ever issue it.

In order to make a Minimum Adequate Vocabulary we have two tasks: (1) To get the Minimum Structure and (2) To get our Minimum of Content words—to which we must add an adequate set of Definers (words which help one to explain the meaning when a necessary content word is lacking).

The General Service List goes considerably beyond a Minimum both in the words included and in the detail of those words. Palmer's *Grammar of English Words* is perhaps nearer to a minimum in respect of the words selected, but again the detail is not minimal e.g. 'This would be the Library'=I suppose it is). Perhaps the best way of finding a Minimum Structural Vocabulary is to pick it out from a complete word-list known to contain it.

All writers who have experience of composing Supplementary Readers written within a limited vocabulary know that up to a point the work is tricky and difficult, and beyond that point it suddenly becomes easy. Thus the vocabulary of *New Method Reader* 4 (1,466 words) is very comfortable (while that of Books I to III is tricky)—but it lacks a set of Definers. *New Method* (*Arab World*) 3 including the definers (2,120 words) certainly covers the Minimum Structural and Defining vocabulary with very few omissions. There are no doubt similar levels in other series of books built up with a limited vocabulary.

Having got the Minimum Structural Vocabulary, what about the Content Words? Is it indeed so impossible to select them?

Obviously, it is possible to select a list of Content Words provided that we have only one pupil and know all about his present and his immediate future. Suppose we have two pupils, one of them being a girl, it becomes more difficult; for example, the boy will not need names of articles of female apparel, but the girl will need names of male clothing because she will have to mend them. Add to our urban boy and girl a country lad: he may need more agricultural words, but not need so many of the luxuries of the city. Let us add a very poor boy and a very rich boy; a literary boy and a practical handy boy; a blue-stocking girl and a butterfly-girl.

Suppose we have to consider not three pupils, but thirty?—or all the pupils in a whole country?—or in several countries?—in the whole world? The answer is that, for the whole world one can predict almost nothing beyond the B.1 (Common Environmental) words. The larger the area and number of pupils the less one can

predict. One can predict only if one limits the area, and the more we limit, the more we can predict.

So we must start by deciding exactly what area is being considered.

Now we take our type-pupil and say all that we know about him—*and all that we do NOT know*. For a start, is it a boy or a girl, or don't we know? What is his age? his physique? his probable future status (lower, middle or upper class)? &c.

We are not here describing any particular group of pupils, but we are fixing our norm. The narrower and more definite we make our description, the more words we shall be able to select.

We now take a large list of words likely to contain far more than all the words the pupils can possibly need. We work through the list and take those words which we *KNOW* that all or the great majority of the pupils will be sure to need. If we do *NOT KNOW*, if we are not sure the word goes out: it may be good for some, but that is not good enough.

We next test the selected list by rewriting within it thousands of words (or better, tens of thousands) of the sort of material which the pupils are likely to say—e.g. modern plays, modern novels, stories of present-day travel, or business conversations, or technical explanations and so on—depending on the purpose of the M.A.V. We note every time the vocabulary shows a gap—some word which is absolutely essential for this context and one which (we feel) ought to be in the list. We first see whether the vocabulary is capable of explaining the idea for which a word is lacking. If it is not, there is something wrong with the set of Definers (the special words for explaining meanings where the suitable word is lacking).

At the same time we put the word itself into a Pending List. It may never be needed again: it may be merely one of those unpredictable momentary needs which are of no importance, like the *COBRA* in the Sherlock Holmes story or an urgent need for *CASTOR OIL*; or it may be a word which will be needed in all sorts of different contexts: in this case it will be entered in the Pending List again and again as the work of writing thousands of words goes on.

Finally we reconsider the words selected in the first place: some may have been noticeable by their absence from our tens of thousands of running words and may be dispensable; and we consider our Pending List and embody those words which have proved their need.

There is one more check which can usefully be applied, although it is a rather dangerous one, namely classification of the vocabulary under as many headings as possible: Foods, Clothes, Tools, Play, &c., &c. The headings for this classification may be found in any of those large 'Word Books' published in French and German.

A sample of the classification of a 1,200-word general conversation vocabulary will be found in *English Words for all Occasions* (Longmans). The classification of Roget's *Thesaurus* would do, but is rather elaborate. The value of this test is that it shows up any unreasonable gaps: thus one may have all the common colours except Purple, all the common fruits but no oranges; *To jump*—but not *To slip* or *slide*. The danger is that it may tempt one to Catenize (see my article in this journal of July, 1951).

After that, one has to do the 'Stretch'—the itemizing of the list, a task in which the General Service List is invaluable. We must show just how much of each word is intended, which meanings, collocations, compounds are to be used, and (here and there) a note on those which are NOT to be used although they would seem to be natural inclusions.

* * * *

It is obvious that such a vocabulary cannot be produced as a universal prescription, and it should be obvious why the Committee which prepared the *General Service List* confined itself to a large list of structural words. Every M.A.V. must necessarily reflect the peculiar policy and circumstances of its compiler. He may desire a 'good foundation' of structural words with a just sufficient set of content words to give it some semblance of reality, or he may want a bare minimum of structure with a generous allowance of content (the sort of vocabulary which the adult learner prefers). Moreover his content words depend on the sex, age, character, social status of the pupil, on his aim in learning the language and the length of the course.

We have in this article referred only to the Vocabulary for speaking and writing. The construction of a Reading Vocabulary is a very different matter.

English Literature *and the* Film—I

ROGER MANVELL[1]

WHEN IT WAS announced that Dickens' 'Pickwick Papers' was to be made into a film by a British company, no one thought the book would survive this adaptation to the screen. Yet the film of 'The Pickwick Papers' was surprisingly good. The process through which the most garrulous, the most quixotic of Dickens' books passed in order to achieve the peculiar form of dramatization suitable for the screen is worth a little thought. The work of adaptation was in the hands of an experienced screenwriter, Noel Langley.

'The Pickwick Papers' was written by Dickens in serial form, and publication of the first chapters was undertaken before the last were conceived, let alone written. Dickens had, therefore, every inducement to elaborate the travels and adventures of his heroes in the manner of the picaresque novels of the previous century. For the fat, charming, good-humoured and innocently worldly Mr. Pickwick and his comic associates Mr. Winkle, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were the kind of characters for whom it was easy to invent a host of comic situations. Elaboration and garrulity were part of Dickens' stock in trade when he was writing in his humorous vein, for the Victorians lived in an age which allowed time for reading, and the multi-volume novel presented no difficulties to readers prepared to chuckle their way through the anecdotes, asides, reflections and personal remarks with which Dickens stuffed his pages. As the thousands of words poured from his pen with all the eloquence of a born talker, the episodic nature of 'The Pickwick Papers' grew with its very popularity, and story linked with story into a grand chain of comedy. Dickens is like the compère of some great charade; his characters are all animated by his own personal nature as a writer. He is their mentor, the man who pulls all their strings. They have no independence apart from his ebullience, his invention, his laughter and his dramatic sense. It is, indeed, for this reason that he has always exercised such an enormous public appeal, and so has attracted the attention of film-makers who want to entertain an equally wide public.

It is worth looking at Dickens in this way before trying to measure the success or failure of those who try to turn his work into the

[1]In the first of these two articles Roger Manvell discusses four British and American films adapted during the past two years from works by Shakespeare, Dickens, Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw.

totally different structure of drama. The success of drama turns on the theatrical shape which the dramatist gives to both plot and situations, and secondly on the quality of the characterization which can be achieved through the dialogue. Now Dickens was a born writer of dialogue because he was a born talker—he loved the *spoken* eloquence of words and the trickeries of speech associated with a theatrical conception of character. I think he would have loved the radio had he lived in our own time, and that he would have created magnificent comedy sketches and possibly plays for broadcasting. So the adaptor starts with the nature of Dickens' dialogue in his favour, and he also finds admirably dramatic situations, both comic and melodramatic, full of colour and atmosphere and vitality—like the trial scene in 'The Pickwick Papers' and the graveyard scene between the boy and the convict in 'Great Expectations'.

But Dickens had no need to bother about the economy and the shapeliness of plot required for the 'two hours' traffic of the stage'. He could ramble on as the winds of invention blew him. So the essential problem facing David Lean when he worked on the film versions of 'Great Expectations' and 'Oliver Twist' and Noel Langley when he was adapting 'The Pickwick Papers' was that of imposing a true dramatic development upon a series of temptingly effective individual situations which had no dynamic link in the novels themselves to make them part of a continuous dramatic story.

There runs through 'The Pickwick Papers' a recurrent theme—the relationship of the benevolent Mr. Pickwick and the selfish trickster Mr. Jingle. Jingle, a strolling actor, keeps appearing and disappearing, getting himself and everyone else into trouble, and therefore spoiling Mr. Pickwick's happy world by creating a series of misadventures. Noel Langley saw in this the age-old formula for a drama—the struggle between black and white. This continuous thread in the book became the core of the film scenario. The greater part of what happens in the film stems from this running encounter, and though certain famous episodes in the book (like the Eatanswill election and the episodes of Bob Sawyer) are lost for fear they might unbalance the dramatic structure of the film, others especially linked with Mr. Pickwick manage to remain.

This brings us to the dramatic presentation of Dickens' characters. In previous articles which I have written for *English Language Teaching* about films derived from English literary sources, I have discussed the problems facing those who turn characters originally conceived in a purely literary form like the novel into dramatic characters intended from the outset to be embodied by actors. Everyone builds up pre-conceived notions about the characters they read about, and the actors' physical presentations of creations like

Pickwick and Wardle, Tupman, Mrs. Bardell and Sergeant Buzfuz always have to face the accumulation of mental pictures in the minds of millions of readers and the consequent accusation that their performances restrict or falsify the imaginative figments of character originally conjured by the magic of Dickens' writing. What pleased so many people about the film version of 'The Pickwick Papers' was the satisfactory incarnation by the actors of these difficult characters—especially in the case of James Hayter's Mr. Pickwick and Donald Wolfit's success with the fantastic legal oratory of Sergeant Buzfuz. The veteran comedian Sir George Robey also makes a brief but effective appearance as the elder Mr. Weller. I can, therefore, with good conscience recommend the film of 'The Pickwick Papers' as a sympathetic attempt to mould a cross-section of a book by Dickens into the dramatic shape required by the screen, with good acting and, what is of further importance, with a good sense of period in the backgrounds, costumes and architectural settings.

Anthony Asquith's film version of Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest' takes us forward seventy years in time to the eighteen-nineties, but we only exchange one world of literary fantasy and caricature for another of equal comic invention. Wilde's characters were, of course, conceived for acting, but they have the same literary garrulity as the men and women of Dickens' pages, though it is the elegant garrulity of a witty aristocracy. They belong essentially to the leisured, mannered world of the late nineteenth century.

'The Importance of Being Earnest' is a comedy in which the audience accepts a basic situation (an elaborate variation on the classic theatrical theme of mistaken identity) and delights in the by-play of the characters as they work their way through it. The Honourable Anthony Asquith is well qualified by culture and background—he is the son of the late Lord Oxford and Asquith, once a Prime Minister of Britain—to understand the niceties of the world which Oscar Wilde was lampooning. His film is characterized by a gracious elegance of speech, a finely mannered style of performance, and a witty and colourful design in costumes. (The costumes, which are remarkable, were in fact designed for this colour film by the same designer who did excellent work on the costumes for the black-and-white production of 'The Pickwick Papers'—Beatrice Dawson.) The result is an unmistakably British film—the recreation of a past age in which style was everything in the social behaviour of certain metropolitan sections of the aristocracy. Wilde's epigrammatic and artificially turned dialogue is now completely out of fashion—we prefer on the stage the realistic prose of Terence

Rattigan and Graham Greene or the realistic verse of T. S. Eliot. However that may be, Anthony Asquith secured Dame Edith Evans for his film so that she might recreate on the screen her famous stage performance as that superbly over-whelming character, Lady Bracknell. There is no mere realism about this.

Dame Edith rightly conceives of a theatrical character as theatrical, and she has done little previous work for the screen. Her first appearance in films was in another highly characterized part—that of the aged Countess in Thorold Dickinson's screen version of Pushkin's story 'The Queen of Spades'. Dame Edith's performance here was carefully controlled to fit within the narrow framework of the screen—the intimate scale of the close-up. The grandeur of her theatrical style—so much larger and richer than actuality—has not been so well tempered to the close-up by Anthony Asquith. The dramatic effect, therefore, is somewhat uneven. The quiet stylisation of performance by those members of the cast who are used to the screen does not quite match that by Dame Edith, and the part of Lady Bracknell is, after all, the spine of the piece. The two pairs of younger people (Michael Redgrave and Michael Denison as the two men and Joan Greenwood and Dorothy Tutin as the two girls) are admirably adjusted in the style of their performance to the smaller dramatic space of the screen-frame, whereas Margaret Rutherford, like Dame Edith, tends to project her characterization of Miss Prism as if she were playing to the back of the circle or the stalls, when she is, in effect, as near to us as if she were sitting just opposite. Nevertheless, Anthony Asquith's film is a successful and faithful production of one of the finest comedies ever written for the British stage.

Recently plays by both Bernard Shaw and Shakespeare have been adapted for the screen in the United States—Shaw's 'Androcles and the Lion' produced for R.K.O. by Gabriel Pascal, and Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' produced for M.G.M. by John Houseman and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz.

Shaw's play is an unconventional religious pantomime which has no parallel in spirit outside the Middle Ages. Shaw, whilst accepting no religious creed or dogma, believed himself to be a religious man, and in the character of Lavinia he embodies more completely even than in St. Joan his concept of a person whose behaviour is consciously guided by religious conviction. Lavinia is one of Shaw's most mature characters, and the essence of the play is contained in the series of arguments about religion which she conducts with the Roman Captain, a sympathetic pagan, in charge of the varied collection of Christian martyrs of which Lavinia is one. These arguments are the serious core of this most delightful play.

Nevertheless, Shaw would not be Shaw if he did not offset argument with farce. The fantastic by-play between the Christian animal-lover Androcles, the lion himself and that magnificently bland opportunist the Roman Emperor, is the result of Shaw's sheer love for slap-stick.

It is, I am afraid, characteristic of Gabriel Pascal's lack of proper understanding of Shaw that in the case of both 'Caesar and Cleopatra' and 'Androcles and the Lion' he throws away most of the significance and maturer charm of these plays in his efforts to give them big-scale 'production value.' 'Caesar and Cleopatra' is a rather delicate comedy of character, concentrating on the sympathetic understanding by a mature man of a young and captious girl who is just beginning to realise her powers over men. Mr Pascal turned this play into one of the most notoriously expensive monoliths in the history of film production, although he had fine players to serve him in Vivien Leigh and Claude Rains, and the film contains some effective scenes between them. Among Cleopatra's serving girls was a young actress, almost a child, called Jean Simmons. Mr Pascal contracted her, when she had become an established star, to play the part of Lavinia in his next Shavian production. Yet he gave her little or no guidance as to the significance of the character in Shaw's play (although the latter had written one of his longest Prefaces to explain what she stands for), and he robbed her of any chance to realise it for herself by cutting out the greater part of the long interchanges between Lavinia and the Captain. I agree that the speeches involved in these scenes are far too long for the screen, but why then choose to film a play the essence of which lies in scenes which are unsuitable for the cinema? Miss Simmons is left to play Lavinia as a pretty girl who faces martyrdom with sweetness, dignity and a rather unaccountable good humour, but with no real and heart-felt *argument* on her lips as to the nature of her faith. The centre of gravity of the film veers away from her to the comedians and eccentrics who people the band of martyrs of which in the original play she becomes the acknowledged intellectual leader. In addition to his ruthless cutting of the play, Mr. Pascal has also permitted an American screenwriter to add certain lines to the play in a poor imitation of Shaw's style.

In the more farcical scenes the film is much more successful. Maurice Evans makes magnificent comedy out of the Emperor who is so frightened of Androcles's tame lion but so anxious to capitalise out of an awkward situation, and both Androcles and his lion are, I think, what Shaw wanted them to be—Androcles an affectionate satire on Christian meekness and the lion sheer fun. Robert Newton's Ferrovius is beautifully spoken, but the wild, roving eye so typical of Newton's finely theatrical performances on

the screen seldom suggests the deeply passionate conviction of this humourless, fanatical strong-man evangelist from whom Shaw derives so much pointed satire. In fact, the real significance of this play has been lost because it has not been understood by the film-makers; it has, in fact, been used as a peg on which to hang gladiatorial 'production value,' on the one hand, and the joys of slap-stick on the other.

Shakespeare's plays, like Dickens' novels, have always attracted the film-maker because of the secret of their eternal popularity and the challenge that they offer to the dramatic imagination. Shakespeare himself worked for twenty years in an atmosphere of show-business which was in a number of ways similar to that of the contemporary world of film-making. His public was very mixed and very demanding of sensational stories, and there was a great deal of money to be made during this first Elizabethan age and subsequently out of star acting and theatrical management. Shakespeare was successful, and his work is designed in many respects to win popular success. Also, by an accident of theatrical history, he wrote mainly for the short-lived Elizabethan and early Jacobean public theatres with their large open-air stages, and the structure of his plays responds to the magnificent opportunities of a stage freed from the mechanics of elaborate settings and the confinements of keeping the action strictly behind a proscenium arch. The structure of Shakespeare's plays have therefore something of the fluidity of a modern screenplay, and in this respect they are far more easy to adapt for the contemporary screen than most contemporary plays. But the visual distraction of constant picture-change, close-ups of faces and the movement of people, which are the essence of screen action, destroys concentration on what is said, and without concentration no one can follow the intricate and subtle chain of thought and feeling and observation which fills Shakespeare's dramatic poetry to the very top.

The problem, therefore, always lies in Shakespeare's complex verse, which demands more knowledge and historical sense than a popular contemporary audience can be expected to give. Hence the slight modernization which Alan Dent introduced into the Shakespearean scripts for Laurence Olivier's film productions, and the drastic cutting away of the verse in favour of an entirely visual treatment of character, plot and situation in Orson Welles's Wagnerian 'impression' of 'Macbeth' in his film version of the play. But the problem always remains unresolved—to what extent can the contemporary mass audiences of the English-speaking world be expected to share the excitement of a Shakespearean play by watching the action rather than by appreciating what the actors are really

saying. They can certainly share something, but will it be enough to carry the film through to success? In this respect, audiences outside the English-speaking countries are more fortunate, for either dubbing or sub-titles in contemporary speech keep them in touch with what is being said as well as what is being done!

I think without question that John Houseman's and Joseph Mankiewicz's film of 'Julius Caesar' is the most successful translation of Shakespeare to the screen that has so far been produced, except possibly for Olivier's 'Henry V'. Next after these comes 'Hamlet', Olivier's second Shakespearean production on the screen. The films of 'Macbeth' and 'Othello' by Orson Welles are really variations on Shakespearean themes, like the Italian operas derived from his plays. But the film of 'Julius Caesar' goes straight to the point, style and feeling of the play, and puts it without fuss or glamour straight on to the screen. In this film there are virtually no visual distractions to entice the spectator's attention from what is being said; this is in contrast to Olivier's films, which were visually-speaking often over-elaborate. As John Houseman has said himself, their job was quite directly to translate 'Shakespeare's bloody and turbulent melodrama into a medium where both mass effects and personal conflict can be more closely observed and more fully developed than under the constant and unchanging focus of a playhouse stage.'

'Julius Caesar' becomes very much an actors' film. It is photographed in close-shot, with no intricate cutting and little visual interruption of speeches by the injection of reaction shots of the listeners or the interlocutors, which is normal in film technique. What is said by the man saying it is all that matters on the screen.

The casting of the chief parts is most interesting. On the American side is Louis Calhern's Caesar and Marlon Brando's Anthony. Both tend to slur the speaking of the verse, throwing aside Shakespeare's vigorous rhythms in favour of the modern psychological approach to these two vivid characters. Calhern plays Caesar like a contemporary dictator, bland and pleased with his political success. Brando plays Anthony with a brooding grandeur all his own. Personality on both cases precedes poetry.

On the British side are James Mason as Brutus and John Gielgud as Cassius. Mason played Brutus with great success at the Guild Theatre in Dublin some twenty years ago when he was virtually unknown. While he is not complete master of the verse in the sense that Gielgud is, he acts with a quiet mastery which makes his choice for the difficult and deliberately undramatic figure of Brutus a sound one.

But for sheer brilliance of performance John Gielgud steals the film. Here is the choice and master spirit of our age in the true, athletic utterance of Shakespeare's poetry. Here is the voice which carries every rhythm to its conclusion, which sustains every note with faultless breathing, which gives every word a ringing rightness of pitch and emphasis. Cassius is made the core of the action, as I believe Shakespeare intended him to be—the portrait of a real political conspirator, quick, intelligent, unscrupulous, opportunist, emotional. He is the opposite of Brutus, with his stubborn, inopportune integrity. Without any hesitation or reservation I commend this production of 'Julius Caesar' to all those who want to share the excitement and pace of a true Shakespearean production.

The Question Box

Conducted by A. S. HORNBY

Questions from readers should be addressed to Mr A. S. Hornby, c o *English Language Teaching*, The British Council, 65 Davies Street, London, W.1.

QUESTION.—What is the function of the pronoun *it* in the sentence: 'The man whose business *it* is to look after the children is not here'? The subject of the clause appears to be *business* and *it* appears to be superfluous. Would it be correct to say: 'The man, the business of whom is to look after the children, is not here'?

ANSWER.—The use of *it* in this sentence would not strike English people as wrong, but *it* is certainly unnecessary. There are two ways of expressing the information contained in the clause:

(1) This man's business is to look after the children.

(2) It is this man's business to look after the children.

In (2) introductory *it* is used for the infinitive phrase and explains the use of *it* when the sentence becomes a relative clause.

There is, too, the (probably unconscious) influence of the Direct Question: 'Whose business is it to look after the children?' In a sentence with a dependent clause, this would be: 'Do you know (Can you tell me, &c.) whose business it is to look after the children?'

The sentence quoted by our correspondent includes a relative clause, not a dependent clause, but the use of *it* is obviously caused by the frequency with which *it* is used for a following infinitive phrase.

The sentence: 'The man, the business of whom is to look after the children, is not here' is incorrect. The clause is a defining clause, not to be marked off by commas. *Whose* is preferable to *of whom*.

QUESTION.—Is the use of the Present Perfect Tense *has recovered* correct in: 'Since he has recovered he has been going to the seaside for a bathe every day'?

ANSWER.—*Since* is used with an adverb or adverb phrase, which must always indicate past time: *since yesterday*, *since 1950*, &c. When *since* is a conjunction, it ought logically to be followed by a Past Tense: *since I left home*, *since you last saw me*. So *since he recovered* is preferable to *since he has recovered*. The use of the Present Perfect Continuous Tense *has been going* makes it quite clear that the person referred to continues to be well and that his recovery was not followed by a relapse.

QUESTION.—Is there any difference between 'It's a long time since I have seen him' and 'It's a long time since I saw him'?
ANSWER.—See the answer to the question above. The second sentence is to be preferred, or the alternative: 'I haven't seen him for a long time.'

QUESTION.—What is the difference between *too* and *also* in:
(1) *Boy* and *girl* are also nouns.
(2) Can you speak English, too?
ANSWER.—In (1) *also* has no clear meaning. *Both* seems to be the word that is needed. The sentence would be correct, of course, if it followed another sentence such as: '*Man* and *woman* are nouns.' In (2) *too* is preferable to *also* because of its position—at the end.
Compare:

He can also speak English.
He can speak English, too.

QUESTION.—Why is *foot*, singular, used instead of *feet*, plural, in: 'He is six foot tall.'
ANSWER.—Words indicating measures of length and weight are in a few cases used in the singular. There is a historical explanation, but neuter types of inflexion (no distinctive plural sign for the plural, as in *deer* and *sheep*) in Old English are of no importance to any but the student of the historical development of English. The use of *foot* as a plural form is still common when followed by a number indicating inches, as in *five foot ten*. Otherwise *feet* is used, as in: *Everest is over* 29,000 *feet high*. Compare *five pound ten* (£5 10*s*. 0*d*.) and *five pounds* (£5). The measure of weight *stone* (14 lb.) is unchanged in the plural: *He weighs ten stone.*

QUESTION.—At the cinema I see on the screen: *An RKO Picture.* Why is *an* used here before a consonant?
ANSWER.—The letter R is a consonant, but its name, when spoken is a vowel sound, a: The caption, when read aloud, is ən 'a: 'kei 'ou 'piktʃə. Similarly: *He's an MA* (i.e. Master of Arts): hi:z ən 'em 'ei. Compare: *He's a BA* (i.e. Bachelor of Arts): hi:z ə 'bi: 'ei.

QUESTION.—Which is right: *Have you not a book*? *Have not you a book*? *Have you no book*?
ANSWER.—None of these is wrong. Most English people would say: *Haven't you got a book*? *Haven't you* is commoner than *Have not you. Have you not* is very formal and rather old-fashioned

QUESTION.—I was taught to use the preposition *with* after *familiar*,. for example, 'to be familiar with a subject'. I recently saw this sentence: 'The names of the speakers will probably be familiar *to* you.' What is the difference?
ANSWER.—*Familiar to* means 'well known' or 'not new'. 'The names are *familiar to* you' means 'You are *familiar with* the names.'

QUESTION.—The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* gives a large number of meanings for the noun *panel* but none of these seems to cover a use of this word which is quite frequent today. I have seen references to BBC Listeners' panels and to panels of speakers or experts. Will you say something about this new use, please.
ANSWER.—The new use of *panel* is an extension of an older use. *Panel* was used for a slip of parchment or paper on which were written the names of men who could be called upon to serve as members of a jury. It came to mean the jurymen. When the National Health Insurance was established, *panel* was used for the list of doctors registered in each district as willing to accept patients under this scheme (now replaced by the National Health Service). Persons registered with a doctor were said to be 'on the panel'. The word is now used much more widely but it retains its general meaning of a list of names of persons who are available for some purpose or other. You may see a reference to a panel discussion. This means a discussion by a group of persons who talk about a subject of general interest, either before an audience in a hall or in a studio from which the discussion is broadcast. A panel of listeners is a list of names of persons who have agreed to listen to certain radio programmes and report their opinions to the broadcasting corporation.

QUESTION.—'I look to *you two* gentlemen to see that . . .' Is this use of *you two* normal? Would it be better to say: 'I look to *both of you* to see that', or to omit the *two*?
ANSWER.—There is nothing unusual in this use of a personal pronoun and a numeral before a noun. The construction is used to make the reference quite clear. If I were making a request to children, I could address them in this way: 'Now I want you five boys to carry this heavy table into the next room and you four girls to carry these chairs.'

QUESTION.—'The temptation, surely, is going to be to safeguard the vast amounts of capital already sunk in coal and gas.' This sentence is not clear to me. Is the provisional subject *it* left out?
ANSWER.—No, there is no need for a provisional subject here. The

subject is 'The temptation', the verb is 'is going to be' (for which 'will be' could be substituted), and the complement is the infinitive phrase.

QUESTION.—Reference books give several different meanings of the expression 'to burn the candle at both ends'. Can you settle the question?

ANSWER.—It is difficult to say definitely how the expression came to have all the meanings given in dictionaries and other reference books. It dates back to the time when candles were used, and the two 'ends' were the ends of the period of darkness. A person who worked by candlelight late into the night and then got up before daylight to resume working was 'burning the candle at both ends'. Such a person would be overworking and would perhaps exhaust himself. From the idea of exhaustion of physical strength or nervous energy there have come the various other ideas associated with the expression: recklessness, prodigality and improvidence. Unwise use of one's energies is the fundamental meaning; prodigality and improvidence are meanings that are less justifiably associated with the expression.

QUESTION.—I was taught to say and write '*as* . . . as', and 'not *so* . . . as'. I have seen numerous examples of 'not *as* . . . as'. Will you please comment?

ANSWER.—Old-fashioned grammar books often give the rule that *so* must be used after *not* in comparisons of inequality. This is not true of present-day English. In colloquial style, especially when *not* is contracted to *n't* and joined to the preceding verb, *as* is commoner than *so*. 'He isn't *as* clever as his sister'; 'It wasn't *as* difficult as I expected.'

QUESTION.—Many dictionaries give, for the letters *wh* in such words as *what*, *where*, *when*, *which* and *while*, the pronunciation w. Thus: wot, wea, wen, witʃ, wail. Daniel Jones, in his *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, gives hw in parenthesis as an alternative. Which is more usual?

ANSWER.—In what Daniel Jones calls 'Received Pronunciation' w is more usual. But in Scotland, Ireland and the north of England many words spelt with *wh* are pronounced with the breathed consonant corresponding to w. The phonetic symbol for this sound is m (an inverted w); the sound is difficult to distinguish from hw. The use of w or hw enables a distinction to be made between such pairs as *witch* and *which*, *wear* and *where*, *wail* and *whale*, *weal* and *wheel*, *weather* and *whether*, *wine* and *whine*.

Those speakers who use m or hw may claim that this is an advantage; in practice the context will almost always show which of the two words is intended.

QUESTION.—Why, in the sentence 'I've had a visitor while you've been out', is the Present Perfect tense used in the clause? It is clear that the person spoken to is no longer out!
ANSWER.—It would be quite correct to say 'while you *were* out'. The use of the Present Perfect Tense is correct enough, however, if the person spoken to has only just returned. If the conversation took place some time after his or her return, the statement would be 'I *had* a visitor while you *were* out'.

QUESTION.—Names of days of the week are transcribed phonetically with the syllable *-day* as -di. *Sunday* is 'sʌndi. I have often heard *-day* pronounced -dei. Is this common?
ANSWER.—No, it is not common. In ordinary conversation -di is the normal pronunciation. But you are quite right in saying that -dei is sometimes heard. I have often heard it from speakers who are broadcasting. Such speakers perhaps think that it is better to use a slow and deliberate pronunciation at the microphone.

QUESTION.—What difference is there when *to* is used instead of *at* with the verb *look*?
ANSWER.—*Look to* may mean 'be careful about', 'pay attention to'. Examples: 'Now, Tom, look to your manners.' 'You'd better look to (examine, check) your tools before you start on that job.' 'Look to it that your tools are all in order.' 'He'll have to look to his laurels.' *Look to* may also mean 'reply upon', as in 'We look to our friends for prompt help in trouble', or 'expect', 'count upon', as in 'He looks to me to help him whenever he's in trouble.'

QUESTION.—What is the meaning of the phrase 'nothing doing'?
ANSWER.—There are numerous meanings. It is used to indicate absence of activity, that everything is quite or dull. Examples 'There's nothing doing in London on Sundays', that is, the theatre: and most of the other places of amusement are closed. It is used in colloquial or rather vulgar style to indicate a refusal. If I make a proposal to someone and he replies 'Nothing doing', it means that he does not agree. If I offer to buy a friend's old car for £150 and he answers 'Nothing doing under £250', it means that he will not accept less than this sum. Only the context can show the meaning, but the general idea is usually clear.

Book Reviews

OUR LIVING LANGUAGE: AN ENGLISHMAN LOOKS AT HIS ENGLISH. A. P. Rossiter. 255 pages. *Longmans Green.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Our Living Language was the title of six broadcasts given by the author in the Home Service in 1952, the scripts of which are printed in Part I of this book together with a lecture on The Spoken Word in Education, given to the National Conference on School Broadcasting in 1949, and a paper on commercial English reprinted from the Durham University Journal. Part II contains four studies of interpretation, analysing the answers given by students and school children to context questions.

In an introductory section addressed to reviewers and others (later defined as the uncommon readers who read prefaces) Mr Rossiter explains at some length that a broadcast talk, at all events for the Home Service, must differ from a lecture and from ordinary speech. He has decided to print his scripts as he originally wrote them.

One of the aims, he says, is *experimental*. Used about writing (unless it is applied to *all* writing), the word 'experimental' is jargon much worse than the 'evolution' to which Mr Rossiter objects in chemistry, for it is not only inapposite, it has something of a *suggestio falsi*. It is usually to be understood as indicating that the writer feels that he has done something unusually good; and that is a sound reason for publishing, though, as Mr Rossiter points out, there are difficulties about a script intended for performance by the author, since so much more is involved than the words on the page. It is not clear whether he considers that the material is also presented in the best way for reading as a book. If not, the 'common reader' is treated rather unfairly, since he is assumed to have skipped the thirty-six pages of introduction.

It is perhaps necessary to make clear, since the title does not do so, that the book is not concerned with 'linguistics' in the technical sense that is commonly given to the word nowadays. It is concerned essentially with the writing (for eye or ear) and the interpretation of English, and it is a pity that Mr Rossiter has strayed into fields such as that of pronunciation, where he is misleading rather than stimulating.

Judged as broadcasts, it seems likely that the talks were very well done. Judged as a book, under the ponderous heading Theory and Hypothesis, they seem very slight.

A GUIDE TO PATTERNS AND USAGE IN ENGLISH. A. S. Hornby. *Oxford University Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This is an important book which should be in the hands of every serious student of English as a foreign language and its teaching. To use a cliché, it 'fulfils a long-felt want'. If there is any major criticism of the book to be made, it is that it goes beyond that want into things no longer lacking.

* * * *

There are five main elements (leaving aside Pronunciation and Spelling) which together make up the sum total of learning a language:—

A. *Vocabulary*—words in all their varieties of meaning when used singly or in specialized groups as idioms or collocations. A knowledge of this with a recognition knowledge of B.1 (below) confers Reading ability. In order to use the language actively in Speaking and Writing, the learner needs four Grammars:—

B.1. *The Grammar of Form*—the changes in the shape of the words occasioned by tense-formation, plurals, etc. This grammar is fully covered by the conventional grammar books of the past.

B.2. *The Grammar of Relation*—the agreement of verb and subject (including such problems as—A large number of . . .? was/were,—raised but not dealt with in Table 74). This also is well-mapped territory in many existing books.

B.3. *The Grammar of Word-selection*—What word goes with which? Averse to—or from. The correct preposition is (or should be) largely learnt as a matter of vocabulary, but other problems remain, Like—or As, Who—or That.

These three parts of language-study are mainly catalogued in such books as Dr Palmer's 'Grammar of English Words' and Fowler's 'Modern English Usage'. But something remains to which Dr Palmer once applied the term 'the concealed liability' of any (however completely) itemized list of learning units going to make up the mastery of a language. That 'concealed liability' is the pattern of the sentence. Here for the first time we get a comprehensive account of—

B.4. *The Grammar of Position*—the shape of the sentence, the scheme into which words must be fitted.

This is not all that the book contains. It supplies in Part II ('Time and Tense') what is perhaps one of the clearest and most comprehensive accounts of the uses and meanings of the English tenses.

Part III (Adjectives and Nouns) is, we feel, a less important part of the book: its subjects are covered elsewhere. Thus (as Mr

Hornby himself notes on page 143), 'The prepositions to be used with adjectives are best learnt by observation . . . When information is needed for composition a good dictionary may be consulted', but Table 78 (Order for placing various adjectives) and the treatment of the position of adverbials will be helpful in overcoming a major stumbling block.

* * * *

There are two main classes of Linguistician—(1) *The Taxonomist* and (2) *The Practitioner*. The taxonomist collects and arranges. His linguistic museum must be complete, and a rare exception is to him as great a joy as an unperforated postage stamp to a philatelist. This book is in some respects a work of taxonomy: not in that it lists abstruse varieties, but that it tends (like the big Oxford Dictionary) to make distinctions in its classification which do not matter much in practice; for example is there a *practically* important difference between 'She said to him that . . .' and 'She told him that . . .'?

The practitioner's task is to take the material presented to him and arrange it in that way in which it can most easily be taught and learnt. In Part V of this book we have a hint as to how this might be done: all teachers would welcome a development of this very significant suggestion.

We can hardly imagine any student learning the list of Patterns off by heart, even in a form like the Latin Gender Rhymes:—

He cut his finger: Pattern One
And Two: He wants to see his son.
Three: We expect him to belong;
And Four: I proved him to be wrong . . .

The attitude of the student is that he feels an urge to say something and he needs to acquire the various ways of saying it, from which he may choose that one appropriate to the immediate situation. Francoise means to go to a dance tomorrow: shall she say 'I intend to—' or 'I mean to—'? 'I'm meaning to—', 'I'm thinking of—'?

In Part V (Various Concepts and How to Express Them) we have as it were a Worm's Eye view of Grammar, the Learner's View—for which we are grateful. Here at last we have a grammarian not arranging desiccated items in little boxes but setting them out on a linguistic tool-bench in the light of prospective need.

Now that (at last!) we have the complete Lay-out of the language (vocabulary and four Grammars, including this last 'concealed liability') it is for the Practitioners to render them assimilable and palatable in the light of Mr Hornby's final suggestion.

AN ENGLISH COURSE FOR CEYLON. I. Morris. Book One, 102 pages, 3*s.*; Book Two, 117 pages, 3*s.* 3*d.*; Book Three, 150 pages, 4*s.*; Book Four, 166 pages, 4*s.* *Macmillan.*

These four books are designed for Primary Schools in Ceylon. They are well printed, attractively illustrated and strongly bound, but are, unfortunately, rather old-fashioned in some ways.

Mr Morris is already well known as the author of textbooks for the teaching of English. His *English by Stages* was reviewed in the September 1953 issue of this periodical. The comments made in that review about the order in which tenses and constructions are presented are applicable to his new books for Ceylon. Once again he has presented the Simple Present, the Simple Past, and Future with *will* and *shall*, even *can* and *could*, before the Present Progressive.

In his Introduction to Book One of these books for Ceylon Mr Morris assumes that teachers will want their pupils to speak the new language. He writes: 'Speech can be satisfactorily attained only if the pupils are trained from the outset to use the new language. This is best achieved by means of the so-called "Direct Method".'

Many teachers will agree that learners, particularly in Asia and Africa, where the vernaculars are not cognate with English, cannot be expected to master more than perhaps the verbs *be* and *have* and one tense in their first year. But is the Simple Tense the right tense with which to begin? Mr Morris writes: 'The keynote of initial language work, as indeed of the whole course, should be activity on the part of the pupils'. But if they are to be active, and if they are to talk about their activities, it is the Progressive Tense, not the Simple Present Tense, that is needed. Mr Morris provides, in Book One, a number of what he calls 'Ear Training' exercises. In these the pupils *silently* perform actions in response to such commands as 'Put your hands up', 'Take this book', 'Put it in that basket'. The term 'ear training' is more usually applied to training the learner to hear and recognize new sounds and combinations of sounds, new rhythms and intonations. This silent drill should, if used at all, be only a preliminary to activity plus speech.

By restricting the learner to the Simple Present Mr Morris requires him to talk not about activity in progress but about habitual or repeated activity. He also requires the learner to manipulate the helping verb *do*. It is surely more difficult for the beginner to master such questions as 'With what do we kick?' than such questions, demonstrated by activity, as 'What am I (is he, are you, etc.) touching (looking at, doing, etc.)?' And even if the Simple Tense is used, oral work requires not 'With what' but 'What . . . with'.

The Simple Tenses are essential to narrative, and therefore to the reading of continuous texts. They are an obvious necessity if the reading approach is to be given priority. But Mr Morris so strongly stresses the value of an oral approach that this postponement of the Progressive Tense until the middle of the second year is difficult to understand.

There are no separate Teacher's Books. Instead there are instructions to the teacher in the form of frequent footnotes, and occasionally whole pages in the Pupils' Books. This is a false economy. A Teacher's Book enables the author to provide necessary guidance to the teacher without distracting the attention of the pupil from what he or she is required to read. Attention is called to new words and constructions by the use of bold type. This is another unnecessary distraction. A good oral method requires new words and constructions to be presented and drilled orally, during the first year or two, before they are seen in print. They are then no longer new. And if the pupils are to answer questions, they should be questions that are heard, not read. Their proper place is in a Teacher's Book. When questions are printed in the Pupils' Book the lesson tends to become a reading lesson, not a genuine oral lesson.

On pages 91-2 of Book Three there is a whole lesson on relative clauses designed for oral work, the text being for the use of the teacher only. It is certainly out of place in the Pupils' Book. It is also open to criticism in that examples of relative pronouns as objects of the verb are all given (including *whom*): 'This is the pen *which* I bought yesterday'; 'He is the man *whom* I saw yesterday'; 'You are the fellow *whom* I'm always glad to see'. This is all under the heading 'Oral'. In ordinary speech these relatives would, of course, be dropped. The combination of the colloquial *fellow* and the formal *whom* in the last of the examples quoted is particularly unfortunate. 'The pen I bought' belongs to oral work. 'The man whom I met' belongs to print or to written work. The learner must be enabled to distinguish between two styles.

The exercises do not appear to be graded very carefully. If a pupil is able to do Exercise 56 in Book Four, which is to write a composition about London (with a skeleton outline to guide him), he must surely be past the stage at which completion exercises such as Exercises 54 and 55 (supply *a*, *an*, *the*, *some* or *any*) are useful.

Mr Morris has succeeded in providing material that is well graded in vocabulary. But, as Mr Mackey has pointed out in a series of articles in this periodical, there are many things to look for in Method besides vocabulary control.

THE TEACHING OF WRITTEN ENGLISH. P. Gurrey. 238 pages. *Longmans Green.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The complaint is sometimes heard, especially from teachers and lecturers in the Institutes of the British Council and similar institutions for adult learners, that insufficient attention is given by experts to the later stages of language courses. The early stages have been dealt with again and again and there is a large body of literature on the subject. The later stages, after the first three or four years' study, have been, it is said, neglected. 'Where do we go from here?' teachers often ask, when their pupils have completed one of the good Beginners' Courses now available.

This new book by Dr Gurrey provides a partial answer to the question. It is not written primarily to help those engaged in teaching English to foreigners, but there is much in the book that will help them. Dr Gurrey has had long experience of the problems, first as Head of the English Department at the University of London Institute of Education and later at the University College of the Gold Coast. In both posts he was in close touch with teachers of English as a foreign language. His recent work with UNESCO has given him further knowledge of the problems.

The book deals primarily with the teaching of English to children who have English as their mother tongue. There are schools in many of the British Dominions and Colonies, and in foreign countries, where English is the medium of instruction. There are, in many countries, language institutes whose students are prepared for examinations such as the Cambridge Certificates. These require a preparation that must be on the same level as that given to children in schools in Great Britain. Dr Gurrey's book, therefore, will be of interest to teachers in a wide variety of schools and institutions. In his preface the author makes a further point. The principles and methods that he sets out can be applied to the teaching of the mother tongue everywhere. The teacher in Nigeria or Madras or Malaya, required to teach his pupils to write in their mother tongue, has the same problems as the British teacher in Great Britain. The point is well made.

Dr Gurrey starts by examining the nature of his enquiry and the nature of language. Language is a means of communication, and it is essential that the child's communication should be satisfying to itself and an aid to self-expression. From the beginning, therefore, school composition must be related to the child's real life. Its vocabulary must not lead to mere verbalism. The mastery of mere linguistic symbols will not do. 'Differentiation in the meanings of words is the result of differentiation of contexts', so we must help

the child by seeing that its attempts to write are related to contexts in real-life situations.

In seven chapters Dr Gurrey sets out the fundamental principles of experience, purpose, interest and aims, and the subsidiary principles of responsibility, confidence and practice. He goes on to deal with method, story-telling and character drawing, composition in the Upper School, and précis-writing.

In the appendices there are notes on oral composition, specimen syllabuses, and useful bibliographies. Throughout the book there are quotations that are always to the point and often thought-provoking. The author has read widely and thought deeply; his book deserves careful examination.

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS. K. M. Willey and W. R. P. Somaratne. 96 pages. *O.U.P. Madras.* 2½ *Rupees.*

This is a book that teachers of English to young beginners everywhere will find useful and stimulating. The authors have been concerned with the teaching of English in Ceylon, but their book should be examined by teachers in other countries of Asia, as well as in Africa and Europe. It is not another book on theory. It is concerned with method, of course, but it is practical and lively. Young or inexperienced teachers will learn much from these pages about giving lessons in ways that will hold the interest and attention of their young pupils.

The Contents page indicates the wide variety of subject matter. There are chapters on Symbols and Pictures, Games, Story-telling and Dramatization, Reading Games and Exercises, Writing Games and Exercises, Substitution Tables, and Libraries. Substitution tables are a feature of most textbooks today, but not all teachers know how to make the best use of them. Here are practical instructions. Many schools have funds for a school library. Here is advice on the reference books and general reading books that should make up a school library. And if funds run to such teaching aids as wall pictures, film strips, films, gramophone records and radio, here are suggestions for using these funds wisely.

Finally there is a comprehensive bibliography and a list of gramophone records for the teaching of English.

ONE WORD AND ANOTHER. V. H. Collins. 164 pages. *Longmans Green.* 1954. 7*s.* 6*d.*

This is a sequel to *The Choice of Words* and continues the attack on cliché, jargon, pompous verbiage, preciosity and bad English. Its aim is 'to help speakers and writers by giving concise explanations,

supported by examples, of the distinctions in meaning of a number of common synonyms whose use is often confused'. These explanations are supported by comments from Sir Ernest Gowers' *A B C of Plain Words*, Eric Partridge's *Usage and Abusage* and the *A B C of English Usages* by H. A. Treble and G. H. Vallins; Americanisms are pointed out and advice given about the 'best' usages; these are current in the language of those who are careful speakers and writers and who pay little heed to the inevitable changes in language.

The earlier book was strongly recommended by the reviewer; but in this one there seems to be less 'descriptive' and more 'prescriptive' comment; this is to be regretted, because one can be sure that Mr Collins does not want to set himself up as a dogmatic authority, and also because these prescriptive comments often seem to be aimed at weakening the natural vigour of the spoken language. For instance, we read: '. . . as verb *slip up*, meaning *blunder*, is an Americanism. This compound word is a bad one, because one *slips down*, not *up*'; and 'The verb *to scotch* is interesting but dangerous . . . It is perhaps therefore best banished from our vocabulary'. There is, too, apparently incomplete understanding that some of the colloquialisms that are objected to are expressions of feeling or wish, and therefore should not be judged on purely logical lines; for example: 'The cruelties practised were *unthinkable*'; a common but absurd colloquialism . . . 'I shall be only *too* pleased to help. How can one be *too* pleased?'; Mr Eric Partridge draws attention to the 'weak and slovenly form of expression' in which *so* is used merely as a substitute for *very* or *much*, without a consecutive clause to follow it. 'It was so annoying'. 'I am so glad to hear she is better'.

Like the earlier book, this one, too, should be in the reference library of every teacher of English and in the hands of every advanced student; though teachers who wish their students to speak a natural, colloquial form of English and to understand the English of their English friends and acquaintances should note some of the colloquialisms that are condemned in this book, and master their usage.

Other Books Received

ONE HUNDRED SONGS AND POEMS. Edited by Dr P. Blumenthal and K. Stern. *Omanuth Co. Ltd., Tel-Aviv, Israel.*

This is a useful collection of one hundred songs and poems, ranging from 'Good Morning to You!' and 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' to simple poems by Blake, Shelley, Stevenson and Tennyson. The songs are provided with the vocal line in musical notation. There is 'A Handbook for Teachers' which provides suggestions on how these songs and poems may be used in the classroom.

WE LEARN ENGLISH. Dr P. Blumenthal, K. Stern, Y. Aloni-Fainberg. Book 1. 160 pages.

This book of 160 pages is designed to cover the first year's work of children in Israel. The first seven or eight weeks are covered by Preliminary Exercises to be done orally. Only the Simple Present and Simple Past Tenses are used. The book is well supplied with exercises and illustrations but the methods used seem rather old-fashioned.

A FOUNDATION COURSE IN ENGLISH. A. R. Moon and G. H. McKay. Book 1. VIII+160 pages. *Longmans Green.* 5*s.* 6*d.*

This is the first book of a course in English Language for secondary schools in England. Books 2 to 5 are in preparation.

ENGLISH EXPLAINED. W. Barnes. Books 1 to 4. *Schofield & Sims Ltd.*, Huddersfield. 5*s.* each.

An English course for English secondary schools. Four 'Marking Guides' are available for teachers at 4*s.* 6*d.* each.

ENGLISH COMPREHENSION AND COMPOSITION. T. H. Dalzell. 92 pages. *F. Warne & Co. Ltd.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

This book is intended for junior classes in English secondary schools.

LOUIS PASTEUR. E. Attwood. VI+154 pages. *Longmans Green.* 2*s.* 9*d.*

An addition to the *Lives of Achievement* series, written within a vocabulary of 2,000 words.

MARCO POLO. A. Johnson. IV+139 pages. *Longmans Green.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

An addition to the *Lives of Achievement* series, written within a vocabulary of 2,000 words.

LA LINGUA INGLESE. E. Mercanti. 444 pages. *G. D'Anna, Messina/Firenze.*

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